

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

Volume 34 Number 6

www.southeastchurchofchrist.org

JUNE 2019

It Is I

Jerry Dailey

On September 10th, 1813, Oliver Hazzard Perry commanded the American Fleet as they encountered the British Fleet in the battle of Lake Erie. Commander Perry's fleet was victorious and hastened the end of the war of 1812. After the battle he sent the following message to Major General William Henry Harrison, "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

In 1970 that famous quote was morphed onto an Earth Day poster saying, "We have met the enemy and he is us." It was also adapted and used in a comic strip of that era named, Pogo. That comic strip is no longer in print.

I'm taking the liberty of morphing the quote still farther into, "I have met the enemy and he is I." Very often we can be our own worse enemy. We are all familiar with the parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee thought very highly of himself and used others as a foil to illustrate his righteousness and value to God. All who read this parable are repelled by his attitude. He was the very essence of an Egocentric. Egocentrism was present in the Garden of Eden, rampant in the first century and remains, unabated, with us today.

This condition, in my opinion, is the basis of sin. We could well replace the psychological term and call it what it really is; "Selfishness." I can identify with that. Consider Eve in the Garden. The serpent tempted her in three ways. Lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and pride of life. The appeal to make one wise seemed to be the over riding factor. Was Eve selfish? I think so. She thought more of her desires than the prohibitions of God and she was certainly aware of them.

Consider some examples of sin in the Bible; Adam, Cain, David, Judas or Simon the sorcerer come to mind. You will be able to think of others besides this list. In every example I can think of, individuals placed their own wants and desires first and relegated the needs of others secondary, ignoring God's commands completely.

The problem, again in my opinion, is particularly insidious because the more grievously we are afflicted with our ego the more difficult it becomes to recognize it in ourselves.

This condition is the antithesis of Jesus' example of humility. Jesus' quiet acceptance of the things that were to befall Him are heralded in Isa. 53; again in Acts chapter 8, and is further explained in II Peter 2:18-25. He endured rejection, torture, abuse, was reviled but reviled not again. He turned the insults over to a righteous God. He placed the matter into His hands. We would all get along better and be more content if we would follow Jesus' example and place our rebuffs into His hands. It would be helpful to turn and read and contemplate that passage in II Peter.

I know that you don't have any trouble with ego issues but just wanted you to know that I'm working on the "I" in my life. Many years ago Gilbert Coull shared with me a formula for living a Godly and contented life. He described the formula by using the acronym "J. O. Y." Translated it means, Jesus, Others and Yourself. I suspect that he knew what he was talking about. Our priorities need to be in that order. Over the years my ego has prompted me to ask myself why I have had so many health problems. I told Vernon, no long ago that I thought I have had every thing at least once except Job's boils. I have asked God many times, "Why me?" Jesus in Matt. 21:23-25 answered a question with a question and God allowed me to finally discover the answer to my question in

Southeast Church of Christ

35 Walnut Ct

Mogadore, OH

330-628-7432

Service Times:

Sunday: 10 am, 10:50am; 6:00pm

Wednesday: 7:30 pm

in the same manner. The answer to the question, “Why me?” was simply “Why not?”

The Cross

Sewell Hall

THE CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB together form the centerpiece of history and the ultimate demonstration of the qualities that make God, God.

Here we see His *mercy* toward helpless mankind, His *grace* extended to those who could not possibly devise a way or pay for their own redemption, His *justice* that could not overlook sin without payment of the penalty, and His *wisdom* that worked out a plan by which guilty sinners could be made righteous (guiltless) without compromising either His justice or His *holiness*. Here, too, we see His sovereign *power* to bring about His purpose despite Satan’s desperate opposition.

Above all other things, the cross provides the strongest evidence of God’s *love*. The man on the cross is the very Son of God whom God loved so much that He desired other sons “conformed to His image, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). On the cross is “the Word” Who was with God in the beginning, Who was God, and Who “became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). And, as someone else said, when we asked Him much He loved us, He said, “This much...” And He stretched out His arms and died.

On the cross at last, “The Seed of the woman bruised the serpent’s head. He fulfilled all the prophecies that had to do with the redemption of mankind. The rending of His flesh was accompanied by the rending of the veil in the material temple, signifying that the way into the true Holy Place, the dwelling of God, was now open to mankind (Heb. 10:20). Here was made possible complete reconciliation between God and His estranged creation (Eph. 2:18).

On the cross was the true sacrifice of which all others were but symbols. The dying Son is the One “whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25-26, ESV).

No wonder Jesus cried as He died, “It is finished” (John 19:30).

“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33, 36).

Note: The above article taken from: *Biblical Insights*, Volume 8, Number 5, May 2008